

The Problem with Questions: Stop Irritating Your Partner!

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A good way to ruin your marriage is to ask your partner a lot of **you questions**, such as, “What’s wrong with you?” “Why don’t you ever answers me?” “Are you angry?” “Why did you not call me?” “Do you love me?” The more questions of this type, the sooner the relationship will be damage. Asking “you” questions is a form of nagging. It is external control and creates a no-win situation for the person being asked the questions. He or she is left with either defending or explaining. The person asking the question gets to be in command of the situation and in the self-elevated position.

Asking a question such as “how was your day?” to show an interest in the welfare of your partner makes sense. However, if he or she does not want to talk at the time, and than increasing the questioning, only leads to a disconnection. Less is more, in these situations. One question may get the ball rolling but if the other person does not want to talk, stop the interrogation! You are not going to drag more information out of your partner by increasing the questioning.

The manner in which some couples communicate is very discouraging. Everything they say seems to take the form of a hostile questioning. You probably know a few people who communicate by questions.

Usually one partner is going crazy attempting to answer all the questions and sometime this is not all. Their response to the questions is almost as great profusion because they will answer the question with a question. The partner inevitably will than answer the partner’s question with another questions. Husband, “ What would you like to

do today?” Wife’s answer, “I do not care what would you like to do today?” Or “How was your day?” response “Fine, how was your day?”

Many of these questions cannot be answered adequately. For instance, the husband may ask, “Do you really love me?” What does the questions mean? The wife will answer, “yes, I love you” but the husband sooner or later will ask the same question again. The husband may want his wife to change some aspect of her behavior but is unwilling to be forthright. He does not know how to tell her outright or wants to avoid responsibility for his actions, so he asks a question.

The outsider can see this crazy making behavior, however to the couple involved in this type of communication it is even more distressing. Few if any of their problems ever get resolved. It’s a game with no end.

People who ask a lot of “you” questions are unwilling to take responsibility for their own behavior and thoughts. Questions and especially “you” questions frequently put the answerer down. The questioner is giving the other person an order. The act of asking such “you” questions puts the questioner in the role of being one up, and it puts the answerer in the role of one down. The one who answers is also bound by the logic of the question as it is asked, unless the person answering the question is able to reframe or change the logic or content of the question. This is frustrating for the answerer because his or her behavior is being defined by the context of the question.

A question can be for action, “Could you please pass me the mustard?” A question could be for information, “What time does the movie start?” However the situation we are talking about the person asking the question is seeking neither information nor action but is making a point and about something he or she has already

formulated or with a position he or she has already taken. The “you” questions is an attempt to set the emotional tone of the relationship by attempting to shift to the responder the responsibility for the topic raised by the asker.

Often, the person asking the questions is really not seeking an answer or information but instead wants you to agree with a point of view he or she has already formulated or with a position he or she has already taken. The questioner cannot be pinned down in terms of taking responsibility for his or her behavior. The Questioner can claim exoneration since “I am only interested in your well being”.

Part Two: Instead of Questions Unequivocal Request In Next Newsletter